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AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE

REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS

FOR CELEBRATING THE

ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE,

AT

THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

ON THE

Fourth of July 1821,

upon the occasion of reading

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Second Edition.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED AT THE UNIV. PRESS, BY HILLIARD AND METCALF.

Sold by Cummings & Hilliard, No. 1 Cornhill, Boston.

1821.

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ADDRESS.

Fellow Citizens,

Until within a few days before that which we have again assembled to commemorate, our fathers, the people of this Union, had constituted a portion of the British nation; a nation, renowned in arts and arms, who, from a small Island in the Atlantic ocean, had extended their dominion over considerable parts of every quarter of the globe. Governed themselves by a race of kings, whose title to sovereignty had originally been founded on *conquest*, spell-bound, for a succession of ages, under that portentous system of despotism and of superstition which, in the name of the meek and humble Jesus, had been spread over the christian world, the history of this nation had, for a period of seven hundred years, from the days of the conquest till our own, exhibited a conflict almost continued, between the oppressions of power and the claims of right. In the theories of the crown and the mitre, *man* had no rights. Neither the body nor the soul of the individual was his own. From the impenetrable gloom of this intellectual darkness, and the deep degradation of this servitude, the British nation had partially emerged. The

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martyrs of religious freedom had consumed to ashes at the stake; the champions of temporal liberty had bowed their heads upon the scaffold; and the spirits of many a bloody day had left their earthly vesture upon the field of battle, and soared to plead the cause of liberty before the throne of heaven. Through long ages of civil war the people of Britain had extorted from their tyrants, not *acknowledgments*, but *grants* of right. With this concession they had been content to stop in the progress of human improvement. They received their freedom, as a donation from their sovereigns. They appealed for their privileges to a sign manual and a seal. They held their title to liberty, like their title to lands, from the bounty of a man, and in their moral and political chronology, the great charter of Runnimead was the beginning of the world.

From the earliest ages of their recorded history, the inhabitants of the British islands have been distinguished for their intelligence and their spirit. How much of these two qualities, the fountains of all amelioration in the condition of men, was stifled by these two principles of subserviency to ecclesiastical usurpation, and of holding *rights* as the donations of kings, this is not the occasion to inquire. Of their tendency to palsy the vigor, and enervate the faculties of man, all philosophical reasoning, and all actual experience concur in testimony. These principles, however, were not peculiar to the people of Britain. They were the delusions of all Europe, still the most enlightened and most improvable portion of the earth. The temporal chain

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was riveted upon the people of Britain, by the conquest. Their spiritual fetters were forged by subtilty working upon superstition. Baneful as the effect of these principles was, they could not forever extinguish the light of reason in the human mind. The discovery of the mariner's compass was soon followed by an extension of commercial intercourse between nations the most distant, and which, without that light beaming in darkness, to guide the path of man over the boundless waste of waters, could never have been known to each other; the invention of printing, and the composition of gunpowder, which revolutionized at once the art and science of war and the relations of peace; the revelation of India to Vasco de Gama, and the disclosure to Columbus of the American hemisphere; all resulted from the incompressible energies of the human intellect, bound and crippled as it was by the double cords of ecclesiastical imposture and political oppression. To these powerful agents in the progressive improvement of our species, Britain can lay no claim. For them the children of men are indebted to Italy, to Germany, to Portugal, and to Spain. All these improvements, however, consisted in successful researches into the properties and modifications of external nature. The religious reformation was an improvement in the science of mind; an improvement in the intercourse of man with his Creator, and in his acquaintance with himself. It was an advance in the knowledge of his *duties* and his *rights*. It was a step in the progress of man, in comparison with which the

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magnet and gunpowder, the wonders of either India, nay the printing press itself, were but as the paces of a pigmy to the stride of a giant. If to this step of human advancement Germany likewise lays claim in the person of Martin Luther, or in the earlier, but ineffectual martyrdom of John Huss, England may point to her Wickliffe as a yet more primitive vindicator of the same righteous cause, and may insist on the glory of having contributed her share to the improvement of the moral condition of man.

The corruptions and usurpations of the church were the immediate objects of these reformers; but at the foundation of all their exertions there was a single plain and almost self-evident principle—that man has a *right* to the exercise of his own reason. It was this principle which the sophistry and rapacity of the church had obscured and obliterated, and which the intestine divisions of that same church itself first restored. The triumph of reason was the result of inquiry and discussion. Centuries of desolating wars have succeeded, and oceans of human blood have flowed, for the final establishment of this principle; but it was from the darkness of the cloister that the first spark was emitted, and from the arches of a university that it first kindled into day. From the discussion of religious rights and duties, the transition to that of the political and civil relations of men with one another was natural and unavoidable; in both, the reformers were met by the weapons of temporal power. At the same glance of reason, the tiara would have fallen from the brow of

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priesthood, and the despotic sceptre would have departed from the hand of royalty, but for the sword, by which they were protected; that sword which, like the flaming sword of the Cherubims, turned every way to debar access to the tree of life.

The double contest against the oppressors of church and state was too appalling for the vigor, or too comprehensive for the faculties of the reformers of the European continent. In Britain alone was it undertaken, and in Britain but partially succeeded.

It was in the midst of that fermentation of the human intellect, which brought right and power in direct and deadly conflict with each other, that the rival crowns of the two portions of the British Island were united on the same head. It was then, that, released from the fetters of ecclesiastical domination, the minds of men began to investigate the foundations of civil government. But the mass of the nation surveyed the fabric of their Institutions as it existed in fact. It had been founded in *conquest*; it had been cemented in *servitude*; and so broken and moulded had been the minds of this brave and intelligent people to their actual condition, that instead of solving civil society into its first elements in search of their rights, they looked back only to conquest as the origin of their liberties, and claimed their rights but as donations from their kings. This faltering assertion of freedom is not chargeable indeed upon the whole nation. There were spirits capable of tracing civil government to its first foundation in the moral and physical nature of man: but conquest and servitude

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were so mingled up in every particle of the social existence of the nation, that they had become vitally necessary to them, as a portion of the fluid, itself destructive of life, is indispensably blended with the atmosphere in which we live.

Fellow citizens, it was in the heat of this war of moral elements, which brought one Stuart to the block, and hurled another from his throne, that our forefathers sought refuge from its fury, in the then wilderness of this Western World. They were willing exiles from a country dearer to them than life. But they were the exiles of liberty and of conscience: dearer to them even than their country. They came too, with *charters* from their kings; for even in removing to another hemisphere, they "cast longing, lingering looks behind," and were anxiously desirous of retaining ties of connexion with their country, which, in the solemn compact of a charter, they hoped by the corresponding links of allegiance and protection to preserve. But to their sense of *right*, the charter was only the ligament between them, their country, and their king. Transported to a new world, they had relations with one another, and relations with the aboriginal inhabitants of the country to which they came; for which no royal charter could provide. The first settlers of the Plymouth colony, at the eve of landing from their ship, therefore, bound themselves together by a written covenant; and immediately after landing, purchased from the Indian natives the right of settlement upon the soil.

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Thus was a social compact formed upon the elementary principles of civil society, in which conquest and servitude had no part. The slough of brutal force was entirely cast off; all was voluntary; all was unbiassed consent; all was the agreement of soul with soul.

Other colonies were successively founded, and other charters granted, until in the compass of a century and a half, thirteen distinct British provinces peopled the Atlantic shores of the North American continent with two millions of freemen; possessing by their charters the rights of British subjects, and nurtured by their position and education, in the more comprehensive and original doctrines of human rights. From their infancy they had been treated by the parent state with neglect, harshness and injustice. Their charters had often been disregarded and violated; their commerce restricted and shackled; their interest wantonly or spitefully sacrificed; so that the hand of the parent had been scarcely ever felt, but in the alternate application of whips and scorpions.

When in spite of all these persecutions, by the natural vigor of their constitution, they were just attaining the maturity of political manhood, a British parliament, in contempt of the clearest maxims of natural equity, in defiance of the fundamental principle upon which British freedom itself had been cemented with British blood; on the naked, unblushing allegation of absolute and uncontrollable power, undertook by their act to levy, without representation and without consent, *taxes* upon the

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people of America for the benefit of the people of Britain. This enormous project of public robbery was no sooner made known, than it excited, throughout the colonies, one general burst of indignant resistance. It was abandoned, reasserted and resumed, until fleets and armies were transported, to record in the characters of fire, famine, and desolation, the transatlantic wisdom of British legislation, and the tender mercies of British consanguinity.

Fellow citizens, I am speaking of days long past. Ever faithful to the sentiment proclaimed in the paper, which I am about to present once more to your memory of the past and to your forecast of the future, you will hold the people of Britain as you hold the rest of mankind,—Enemies in war—in peace, Friends. The conflict for independence is now itself but a record of history. The resentments of that age may be buried in oblivion. The stoutest hearts, which then supported the tug of war, are cold under the clod of the valley. My purpose is to rekindle no angry passion from its embers: but this annual solemn perusal of the instrument, which proclaimed to the world the causes of your existence as a nation, is not without its just and useful purpose.

It is not by the yearly reiteration of the wrongs endured by your fathers, to evoke from the sepulchre of time the shades of departed tyranny; it is not to draw from their dread abode the frailties of an unfortunate monarch, who now sleeps with his fathers, and the sufferings of whose latter days may have atoned at

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the bar of divine mercy, for the sins which the accusing angel will read from *this scroll* to his charge; it is not to exult in the great moral triumph by which the Supreme Governor of the world crowned the cause of your country with success. No; the purpose for which you listen with renewed and never languishing delight to the reading of this paper, is of a purer and more exalted cast. It is sullied with no vindictive recollection. It is degraded by no rankling resentment. It is inflated with no vain and idle exultation of victory. The Declaration of Independence, in its primary purport, was merely an *occasional* state-paper. It was a solemn exposition to the world, of the *causes* which had *compelled* the people of a small portion of the British empire, to cast off the allegiance and renounce the protection of the British king: and to dissolve their social connexion with the British people. In the annals of the human race, the separation of one people into two, is an event of no uncommon occurrence. The successful resistance of a people against oppression, to the downfal of the tyrant and of tyranny itself, is the lesson of many an age, and of almost every clime. It lives in the venerable records of Holy Writ. It beams in the brightest pages of profane history. The names of Pharaoh and Moses, of Tarquin and Junius Brutus, of Geisler and Tell, of Christiern and Gustavus Vasa, of Philip of Austria and William of Orange, stand in long array through the vista of time, like the Spirit of Evil and the Spirit of Good, in embattled opposition to each other, from the mouldering ages of antiquity, to the recent memory of

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our fathers, and from the burning plains of Palestine, to the polar frost of Scandinavia.

For the independence of North America, there were ample and sufficient causes in the laws of moral and physical nature. The tie of colonial subjection is compatible with the essential purposes of civil government, only when the condition of the subordinate state is from its weakness incompetent to its own protection. Is the greatest moral purpose of civil government, the administration of justice? And if justice has been truly defined, the constant and perpetual will of securing to every one his *right*, how absurd and impracticable is that form of polity, in which the dispenser of justice is in one quarter of the globe, and he to whom justice is to be dispensed is in another; where "moons revolve and oceans roll between the order and its execution;" where time and space must be annihilated to secure to every one his right. The tie of colonial subjection may suit the relations between a great naval power, and the settlers of a small and remote Island in the incipient stages of society: but was it possible for British intelligence to imagine, or British sense of justice to desire, that through the boundless ages of time, the swarming myriads of freemen, who were to civilize the wilderness and fill with human life the solitudes of this immense continent, should receive the mandates of their earthly destinies from a council chamber at St. James's, or bow forever in submission to the omnipotence of St. Stephen's Chapel? Are the essential purposes of civil government, to administer to the wants, and to fortify

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the infirmities of solitary man? To unite the sinews of numberless arms, and combine the councils of multitudes of minds, for the promotion of the well-being of all? The first moral element then of this composition is sympathy between the members of which it consists; the second is sympathy between the giver and the receiver of the law. The sympathies of men begin with the relations of domestic life. They are rooted in the natural relations of husband and wife, of parent and child, of brother and sister; thence they spread through the social and moral propinquites of neighbor and friend, to the broader and more complicated relations of countryman and fellow-citizen; terminating only with the circumference of the globe which we inhabit, in the co-extensive charities incident to the common nature of man. To each of these relations, different degrees of sympathy are allotted by the ordinances of nature. The sympathies of domestic life are not more sacred and obligatory, but closer and more powerful, than those of neighborhood and friendship. The tie which binds us to our country is not more holy in the sight of God, but it is more deeply seated in our nature, more tender and endearing, than that common link which merely connects us with our fellow-mortal, man. It is a common government that constitutes our *country*. But in THAT association, all the sympathies of domestic life and kindred blood, all the moral ligatures of friendship and of neighbourhood, are combined with that instinctive and mysterious connexion between man and physical nature,

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which binds the first perceptions of childhood in a chain of sympathy with the last gasp of expiring age, to the spot of our nativity, and the natural objects by which it is surrounded. These sympathies belong and are indispensable to the relations ordained by nature between the individual and his country. They dwell in the memory and are indelible in the hearts of the first settlers of a distant colony. These are the feelings under which the children of Israel "sat down by the rivers of Babylon, and wept when they remembered Zion." These are the sympathies under which they "hung their harps upon the willows," and instead of songs of mirth, exclaimed, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." But these sympathies can never exist for a country, which we have never seen. They are transferred in the hearts of succeeding generations, from the country of human institution, to the country of their birth; from the land of which they have only heard, to the land where their eyes first opened to the day. The ties of neighbourhood are broken up, those of friendship can never be formed, with an intervening ocean; and the natural ties of domestic life, the all-subduing sympathies of love, the indissoluble bonds of marriage, the heart-riveted kindliness of consanguinity, gradually wither and perish in the lapse of a few generations. All the elements, which form the basis of that sympathy between the individual and his country, are dissolved.

Long before the Declaration of Independence, the great mass of the people of America and of the people

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of Britain had become total strangers to each other. The people of America were known to the people of Britain only by the transactions of trade; by shipments of lumber and flax-seed, indigo and tobacco. They were known to the government only by half a dozen colonial agents, humble, and often spurned suitors at the feet of power, and by royal governors, minions of patronage, sent from the footstool of a throne beyond the seas, to rule a people of whom they knew nothing; as if an inhabitant of the moon should descend to give laws to the dwellers upon earth. Here and there, a man of letters and a statesman, conversant with all history, knew something of the colonies, as he knew something of Cochin China and Japan. Yet even the prime minister of England, urging upon his omnipotent parliament laws for grinding the colonies to submission, could talk, without amazing or diverting his hearers, of the island of Virginia: even Edmund Burke, a man of more ethereal mind, *apologizing* to the people of Bristol, for the offence of sympathizing with the distresses of our country, ravaged by the fire and sword of Britons, asked indulgence for his feelings on the score of general humanity, and expressly declared that the Americans were a nation utter strangers to him, and among whom he was not sure of having a single acquaintance. The sympathies therefore most essential to the communion of country were, between the British and American people, extinct. Those most indispensable to the just relation between sovereign and subject, had never existed and could not exist between the British govern-

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ment and the American people. The connexion was unnatural ; and it was in the moral order no less than in the positive decrees of Providence, that it should be dissolved.

Yet, fellow-citizens, these are not the causes of the separation assigned in the paper which I am about to read. The connexion between different portions of the same people and between a people and their government, is a connexion of *duties* as well as of *rights*. In the long conflict of twelve years which had preceded and led to the Declaration of Independence, our fathers had been not less faithful to their *duties*, than tenacious of their *rights*. Their resistance had not been rebellion. It was not a restive and ungovernable spirit of ambition, bursting from the bonds of colonial subjection ; it was the deep and wounded sense of successive wrongs, upon which complaint had been only answered by aggravation, and petition repelled with contumely, which had driven them to their last stand upon the adamantine rock of human rights.

It was *then* fifteen months after the blood of Lexington and Bunker's hill, after Charlestown and Falmouth, fired by British hands, were but heaps of ashes, after the ear of the adder had been turned to two successive supplications to the throne ; after two successive appeals to the people of Britain, as *friends*, *countrymen*, and *brethren*, to which no responsive voice of sympathetic tenderness had been returned,—

> "Nought but the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
> Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
> To the grim idol :—"

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Then it was that the thirteen United Colonies of North America, by their delegates in Congress assembled, exercising the first act of sovereignty by a right ever inherent in the people, but never to be resorted to, save at the awful crisis when civil society is solved into its first elements, declared themselves free and independent states; and two days afterwards, in justification of that act, issued this

UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

"When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires, that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self evident—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments, long established, should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But

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when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation, till his assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature—a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies, at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representatives houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large, for their exercise; the state remaining, in the meantime, exposed to all the danger of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

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He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others, to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriation of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others, to subject us to a jurisdiction, foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:—

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them by a mock trial, from punishment for any murder which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing taxes on us, without our consent:

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:

For transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free system of English law in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies:

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For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power, to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is, at this time, transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries, to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun, with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions, we have petitioned for redress, in the most humble terms: our petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince whose character is thus marked, by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts made by their legislature, to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred, to

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disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connexions and correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind—enemies in war;—in peace, friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in general congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world, for the rectitude of our intentions, Do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour."

It is not, let me repeat, fellow-citizens, it is not the long enumeration of intolerable wrongs concentrated in this declaration; it is not the melancholy catalogue of alternate oppression and intreaty, of reciprocated indignity and remonstrance, upon which, in the celebration of this anniversary, your memory delights to dwell. Nor is it yet that the justice of your cause was vindicated by the God of battles; that in a conflict of seven years, the history of the war by which you maintained that declaration, became the history of the civilized world; that the unanimous voice of enlightened Europe

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and the verdict of an after age have sanctioned your assumption of sovereign power, and that the name of your Washington is enrolled upon the records of time, first in the glorious line of heroic virtue. It is not that the monarch himself, who had been your oppressor, was compelled to recognise you as a sovereign and independent people, and that the nation, whose feelings of fraternity for you had slumbered in the lap of pride, was awakened in the arms of humiliation to your equal and no longer contested rights. The primary purpose of this declaration, the proclamation to the world of the causes of our revolution, is "with the years beyond the flood." It is of no more interest to us than the chastity of Lucretia, or the apple on the head of the child of Tell. Little less than forty years have revolved since the struggle for independence was closed; another generation has arisen; and in the assembly of nations our republic is already a matron of mature age. The cause of your independence is no longer upon trial. The final sentence upon it has long since been passed upon earth and ratified in heaven.

The interest, which in this paper has survived the occasion upon which it was issued; the interest which is of every age and every clime; the interest which quickens with the lapse of years, spreads as it grows old, and brightens as it recedes, is in the principles which it proclaims. It was the first solemn declaration by a nation of the only *legitimate* foundation of civil government. It was the corner stone of a new fabric, destined to cover the surface of the globe. It demol-

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ished at a stroke the lawfulness of all governments founded upon conquest. It swept away all the rubbish of accumulated centuries of servitude. It announced in practical form to the world the transcendent truth of the unalienable sovereignty of the people. It proved that the social compact was no figment of the imagination; but a real, solid, and sacred bond of the social union. From the day of this declaration, the people of North America were no longer the fragment of a distant empire, imploring justice and mercy from an inexorable master in another hemisphere. They were no longer children appealing in vain to the sympathies of a heartless mother; no longer subjects leaning upon the shattered columns of royal promises, and invoking the faith of parchment to secure their rights. They were a *nation*, asserting as of right, and maintaining by war, its own existence. A nation was born in a day.

> "How many ages hence
> Shall this their lofty scene be acted o'er
> In states unborn, and accents yet unknown?"

It will be acted o'er, fellow-citizens, but it can never be repeated. It stands, and must forever stand alone, a beacon on the summit of the mountain, to which all the inhabitants of the earth may turn their eyes for a genial and saving light, till time shall be lost in eternity, and this globe itself dissolve, nor leave a wreck behind. It stands forever, a light of admonition to the rulers of men; a light of salvation and redemption to the oppressed. So long as this planet shall be inhabit-

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ed by human beings, so long as man shall be of social nature, so long as government shall be necessary to the great moral purposes of society, and so long as it shall be abused to the purposes of oppression, so long shall this declaration hold out to the sovereign and to the subject the extent and the boundaries of their respective rights and duties; founded in the laws of nature and of nature's God. Five and forty years have passed away since this Declaration was issued by our fathers; and here are we, fellow-citizens, assembled in the full enjoyment of its fruits, to bless the Author of our being for the bounties of his providence, in casting our lot in this favored land; to remember with effusions of gratitude the sages who put forth, and the heroes who bled for the establishment of this Declaration; and, by the communion of soul in the reperusal and hearing of this instrument, to renew the genuine Holy Alliance of its principles, to recognize them as eternal truths, and to pledge ourselves and bind our posterity to a faithful and undeviating adherence to them.

Fellow-citizens, our fathers nave been faithful to them before us. When the little band of their Delegates, "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, for the support of this declaration, mutually pledged to each other their *lives*, their *fortunes*, and their *sacred honor*," from every dwelling, street, and square of your populous cities, it was re-echoed with shouts of joy and gratulation! and if the silent language of the heart could have been heard, every hill upon the surface of this continent which had been

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trodden by the foot of civilized man, every valley in which the toil of your fathers had opened a paradise upon the wild, would have rung, with one accordant voice, louder than the thunders, sweeter than the harmonies of the heavens, with the solemn and responsive words, "*We swear.*"

The pledge has been redeemed. Through six years of devastating but heroic war, through nearly forty years of more heroic peace, the principles of this declaration have been supported by the toils, by the vigils, by the blood of your fathers and of yourselves. The conflict of war had begun with fearful odds of apparent human power on the side of the oppressor. He wielded at will the collective force of the mightiest nation in Europe. He with more than poetic truth asserted the dominion of the waves. The power, to whose unjust usurpation your fathers hurled the gauntlet of defiance, baffled and vanquished by them, has even since, stripped of all the energies of this continent, been found adequate to give the law to its own quarter of the globe, and to mould the destinies of the European world. It was with a sling and a stone, that your fathers went forth to encounter the massive vigor of this Goliah. They slung the heaven-directed stone, and

"With heaviest sound, the giant monster fell."

Amid the shouts of victory your cause soon found friends and allies in the rivals of your enemies. France recognized your independence as existing in fact, and made common cause with you for its support. Spain

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and the Netherlands, without adopting your principles, successively flung their weight into your scale. The Semiramis of the North, no convert to your doctrines, still conjured all the maritime neutrality of Europe in array against the usurpations of your antagonist upon the seas. While some of the fairest of your fields were ravaged, while your towns and villages were consumed with fire, while the harvests of your summers were blasted, while the purity of virgin innocence and the chastity of matronly virtue were violated, while the living remnants of the field of battle were reserved for the gibbet, by the fraternal sympathies of Britons throughout your land, the waters of the Atlantic ocean, and those that wash the shores of either India, were dyed with the mingled blood of combatants in the cause of North American independence.

In the progress of time, that vial of wrath was exhausted. After seven years of exploits and achievements like these, performed under the orders of the British king; to use the language of the Treaty of Peace, "it having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the hearts of the most serene and most potent prince, George the Third, by the grace of God king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, duke of Brunswick and Luneburg, arch treasurer and prince elector of the holy Roman empire, and so forth—and of the United States of America, to"—what?—"to forget all past misunderstandings and differences that have unhappily"—what?—"interrupted the good correspondence and friendship which they

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mutually wish to restore"—what then? why—"His Britannic majesty ACKNOWLEDGES the said United States, viz. New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, to be *free, sovereign,* and *independent* States; that he treats with them as such; and for himself, his heirs and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government, propriety, and territorial rights of the same, and every part thereof."

Fellow-citizens, I am not without apprehension that some parts of this extract, cited to the word and to the letter from the Treaty of Peace of 1783, may have discomposed the *serenity* of your temper. Far be it from me, to *dispose your hearts* to a levity unbecoming the hallowed dignity of this day. But this Treaty of Peace is the *dessert,* appropriate to the sumptuous banquet of the Declaration. It is the epilogue to that unparalleled drama, of which the Declaration is the prologue. Observe, my countrymen and friends, how the rules of unity, prescribed by the great masters of the fictive stage, were preserved in this tragedy of pity and terror in real life. Here was a beginning, a middle, and an end, of one mighty action. The beginning, was the Declaration which we have read: the middle, was that sanguinary, calamitous, but glorious war, which calls for deeper colors and a brighter pencil than mine to pourtray: the end, was the disposal of Divine Providence, that same Divine Providence, upon whose

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protection your fathers had so solemnly and so effectually declared their firm reliance, of the heart of the most serene and most potent prince, to acknowledge your independence to the precise extent in which it had been declared. Here was no great charter of Runnimead, yielded and accepted as a grant of royal bounty. That which the Declaration had asserted, which seven years of mercy-harrowing war had contested, was here in express and unequivocal terms *acknowledged.* And how? By the mere disposal of the heart of the most serene and most potent *prince.*

The Declaration of Independence pronounced the irrevocable decree of political separation, between the United States and their people on the one part, and the British king, government, and nation on the other. It proclaimed the first principles on which civil government is founded, and derived from them the justification before earth and heaven of this act of sovereignty. But it left the people of this union, collective and individual, without *organized* government. In contemplating this state of things, one of the profoundest of British statesmen, in an ecstacy of astonishment exclaimed, "Anarchy is found tolerable!" But there was no anarchy. From the day of the Declaration, the people of the North American union, and of its constituent states, were associated bodies of civilized men and christians, in a state of nature, but not of anarchy. They were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of the gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledged as the rules of their conduct. They

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were bound by the principles which they themselves had proclaimed in the declaration. They were bound by all those tender and endearing sympathies, the absence of which, in the British government and nation, towards them, was the primary cause of the distressing conflict in which they had been precipitated by the headlong rashness and unfeeling insolence of their oppressors. They were bound by all the beneficent laws and institutions, which their forefathers had brought with them from *their* mother country, not as servitudes but as rights. They were bound by habits of hardy industry, by frugal and hospitable manners, by the general sentiments of social equality, by pure and virtuous morals; and lastly they were bound by the grappling-hooks of common suffering under the scourge of oppression. Where then, among such a people, were the materials for anarchy! Had there been among them no other law, they would have been a law unto themselves.

They had before them in their new position, besides the maintenance of the independence which they had declared, three great objects to attain; the first, to cement and prepare for perpetuity their common union and that of their posterity; the second, to erect and organize civil and municipal governments in their respective states: and the third, to form connexions of friendship and of commerce with foreign nations. For all these objects, the same Congress which issued the Declaration, and at the same time with it, had provided. They recommended to the several states to form civil

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governments for themselves; with guarded and cautious deliberation they matured a confederation for the whole Union; and they prepared treaties of commerce, to be offered to the principal maritime nations of the world. All these objects were in a great degree accomplished amid the din of arms, and while every quarter of our country was ransacked by the fury of invasion. The states organized their governments, all in republican forms, all on the principles of the Declaration. The confederation was unanimously accepted by the thirteen states: and treaties of commerce were concluded with France and the Netherlands, in which, for the first time, the same just and magnanimous principles, consigned in the Declaration of Independence, were, so far as they could be applicable to the intercourse between nation and nation, solemnly recognized. When experience had proved that the confederation was not adequate to the national purposes of the country, the people of the United States, without tumult, without violence, by their delegates all chosen upon principles of equal right, formed a more perfect union, by the establishment of the federal constitution. This has already passed the ordeal of one human generation. In all the changes of men and of parties through which it has passed, it has been administered on the same fundamental principles. Our manners, our habits, our feelings, are all republican; and if our principles had been, when first proclaimed, doubtful to the ear of reason or the sense of humanity, they would have been reconciled to our understanding and endeared to our

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hearts by their practical operation. In the progress of forty years since the acknowledgment of our Independence, we have gone through many modifications of internal government, and through all the vicissitudes of peace and war, with other mighty nations. But never, never for a moment have the great principles, consecrated by the Declaration of this day, been renounced or abandoned.

And now, friends and countrymen, if the wise and learned philosophers of the older world, the first observers of nutation and aberration, the discoverers of maddening ether and invisible planets, the inventors of Congreve rockets and shrapnel shells, should find their hearts disposed to inquire, what has America done for the benefit of mankind? let our answer be this—America, with the same voice which spoke herself into existence as a nation, proclaimed to mankind the inextinguishable rights of human nature, and the only lawful foundations of government. America, in the assembly of nations, since her admission among them, has invariably, though often fruitlessly, held forth to them the hand of honest friendship, of equal freedom, of generous reciprocity. She has uniformly spoken among them, though often to heedless and often to disdainful ears, the language of equal liberty, equal justice, and equal rights. She has, in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations, while asserting and maintaining her own. She has abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when the conflict has been for principles to which

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she clings, as to the last vital drop that visits the heart. She has seen that probably for centuries to come, all the contests of that Aceldama, the European World, will be contests between inveterate power, and emerging right. Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause, by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself, beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force. The frontlet upon her brows would no longer beam with the ineffable splendor of freedom and independence; but in its stead would soon be substituted an imperial diadem, flashing in false and tarnished lustre the murky radiance of dominion and power. She might become the dictatress of the world: she would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit.

Stand forth, ye champions of Britannia, ruler of the waves! Stand forth, ye chivalrous knights of chartered liberties and the rotten borough! Enter the lists, ye

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boasters of *inventive* genius! ye mighty masters of the palette and the brush! ye improvers upon the sculpture of the Elgin marbles! ye spawners of fustian romance and lascivious lyrics! Come, and inquire what has America done for the benefit of mankind! In the half century which has elapsed since the declaration of American independence, what have *you* done for the benefit of mankind? When Themistocles was sarcastically asked by some great musical genius of his age, whether he knew how to play upon the lute, he answered, No! but he knew how to make a great city of a small one. We shall not contend with you for the prize of music, painting, or sculpture. We shall not disturb the extatic trances of your chemists, nor call from the heavens the ardent gaze of your astronomers. We will not ask you who was the last president of your Royal Academy. We will not inquire by whose mechanical combinations it was, that your steam-boats stem the currents of your rivers, and vanquish the opposition of the winds themselves upon your seas. We will not name the inventor of the cotton-gin, for we fear that you would ask us the meaning of the word, and pronounce it a provincial barbarism. We will not name to you him, whose graver defies the imitation of forgery, and saves the labor of your executioner, by taking from your greatest geniuses of robbery the power of committing the crime. He is now among yourselves; and since your philosophers have permitted him to prove to them the compressibility of water, you may perhaps claim him for your own. Would you

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soar to fame upon a rocket, or burst into glory from a shell? We shall leave you to inquire of your naval heroes their opinion of the steam-battery and the torpedo. It is not by the contrivance of agents of destruction, that America wishes to commend her inventive genius to the admiration or the gratitude of after times; nor is it even by the detection of the secrets or the composition of new modifications of physical nature.

"Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra."

Nor even is her purpose the glory of Roman ambition; nor "tu regere *imperio* populos" her memento to her sons. Her glory is not *dominion*, but *liberty*. Her march is the march of mind. She has a spear and a shield; but the motto upon her shield is *Freedom, Independence, Peace*. This has been her declaration: this has been, as far as her necessary intercourse with the rest of mankind would permit, her practice.

My countrymen, fellow-citizens, and friends; could that Spirit, which dictated the Declaration we have this day read, that Spirit, which "prefers before all temples the upright heart and pure," at this moment descend from his habitation in the skies, and within this hall, in language audible to mortal ears, address each one of us, here assembled, our beloved country, Britannia ruler of the waves, and every individual among the sceptred lords of humankind; his words would be,

"Go thou and do likewise!"

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